



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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LEBANESE NATIONAL CONVICTED IN FRAUDULENT DOCUMENT SCHEME

LOS ANGELES – A federal jury here yesterday convicted a Lebanese national on four felony counts for mailing fraudulent immigration documents and Social Security cards to Lebanon to help two male acquaintances enter the United States illegally.

Maher Hamdan Abbouchi, 27, was arrested in March by investigators from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) for transferring false identification documents. The probe began after a parcel Abbouchi sent to Lebanon was intercepted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers at a mail processing center in Louisville, Kentucky. Inside, CBP officers found two fraudulent permanent resident or “green cards” and two fake Social Security cards. The ensuing 18-month investigation was conducted jointly by special agents with ICE and the SSA.

ICE agents say the package Abbouchi mailed contained a letter directing the recipient to take the false documents to the Mexican embassy in Beirut and use them to obtain tourist visas to Mexico. Once the recipients arrived in Mexico, Abbouchi stated he would pick up the individuals and bring them to the United States illegally.

“We are working aggressively to address potential vulnerabilities in our nation’s immigration system,” said Loraine Brown, special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in Los Angeles. “This case is an outstanding example of how the vigilance and cooperation of agencies within the Department of Homeland Security is helping us succeed in that mission.”

Abbouchi’s sentencing is set for December 12. He faces a maximum sentence of up to six years in prison.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.